

JANUARY 8, 1976

THE WINTER OF BREZHNEV'S DISCONTENT

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN SEES MOSCOW CONFRONTED WITH A NEW CHALLENGE--THIS TIME FROM THE ITALIAN, FRENCH AND JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTIES--TO ITS CLAIM OF WORLD COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP.

VOICE: FOR ALMOST SIXTY YEARS, SOVIET COMMUNISM HAS HELD UP A MIRROR TO THE WORLD REFLECTING ITS SELF-DESIGNED IMAGE AS THE SOLE ARBITER OF ORTHODOX COMMUNISM. IT CONTINUES TO DO SO EVEN THOUGH THE MIRROR OVER THE YEARS HAS DEVELOPED SOME CRACKS. THE FIRST CAME WHEN YUGOSLAVIA'S MARSHAL TITO SPLIT WITH MOSCOW ON THE GROUNDS OF HIS COUNTRY'S RIGHT TO INTERPRET LENINIST THOUGHT ALONG NATIONALISTIC LINES. THE SECOND CRACK--EVEN DEEPER AND WIDER --CAME WHEN CHINA AND ALBANIA REJECTED MOSCOW'S BID FOR INFALLIBILITY IN INTERPRETING MARXIST DOCTRINE. AND NOW A THIRD CRACK IN THE SOVIET MIRROR SEEMS DEVELOPING, WITH THE ITALIAN, FRENCH AND JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTIES ASSERTING THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW.

LAST MID-NOVEMBER THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES ISSUED A DECLARATION STATING THEIR JOINT INDEPENDENCE FROM SOVIET LEADERSHIP. THEY SAID THEY SUPPORTED FREEDOMS OF SPEECH, RELIGION, PRESS AND ASSOCIATION AND POLITICAL PLURALISM.

WHILE REMINISCENT OF THE STANDS TAKEN BY MARSHAL TITO, MAO TZE-TUNG AND HOXA OF ALBANIA, THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN DECLARATION REPRESENTED AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE. FOR IT MARKED THE FIRST TIME THAT THE TWO LARGEST NON-RULING COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE HAD TAKEN SUCH A STAND SO OPENLY AND CATEGORICALLY. AND THEIR POSITION IS ALSO REMINISCENT OF THAT ASSUMED FOR A LONG TIME BY JAPAN'S OWN COMMUNIST PARTY--THE FIRST NON-RULING PARTY IN EAST ASIA TO TAKE SUCH A

STAND. IN FACT, THE JAPANESE COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT ONLY SPLIT WITH MOSCOW, BUT ALSO WITH PEKING, AND THEY ACCUSE BOTH IDEOLOGICAL GIANTS OF CONSPIRING TO IMPOSE THEIR HEGEMONY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

IT IS AN EASY TEMPTATION IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WEST TO SEE THIS CRUMBLING OF THE COMMUNIST MONOLITH AS AN ADVANTAGE. BUT THE DANGER INHERENT IN THAT IS THE FURTHER TEMPTATION TO DISCOUNT THE TENACITY OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IN PURSUING ITS GOAL OF HEGEMONY. RECENT SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA AND MOSCOW'S CLEAR AUTHORITY IN ASSERTING ITS LEADERSHIP AMONG CERTAIN WESTERN PARTIES SUCH AS CUBA'S, WHICH IT IS USING AS A SURROGATE TO MAN THE WEAPONS MOSCOW IS SHIPPING TO ANGOLA IS A CASE IN POINT.

ANGOLA ILLUSTRATES THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET POLICY IS ABLE TO SHIFT GEARS FROM AN APPARENT ADVOCACY OF LEGAL TACTICS TO ACHIEVE POWER IN NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, TO ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR MINORITY MOVEMENTS SUCH AS THE M.P.L.A. IT IS THESE TACTICS ON THE PART OF MOSCOW'S COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP THAT ARE CAUSING CONCERN IN THE WEST IN THE CONTEXT OF ANGOLA. FOR IT MAY BE SYMPTOMATIC OF A NEW DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF MOSCOW TO RECREATE ITS MARRED IMAGE AS THE LEADER OF THE WORLD'S COMMUNISTS.

IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, THE INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW BEING PROCLAIMED BY NON-RULING PARTIES IS BASICALLY A TACTICAL MOVE TO ACHIEVE RESPECTABILITY AND, EVENTUALLY, POWER. THUS, WHILE SUCH A MOVE MAY ON THE SURFACE PROVE TO BE A HEADACHE FOR BREZHNEV, IT IS BY NO MEANS A CAUSE FOR RELAXATION IN THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD.